

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 3-4 were indicated as allowable; and claims 1 and 5-9 were rejected. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claims 3 and 4. Claims 3 and 4 each have been placed into independent form and include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Although Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection of claims 1 and 5-9, independent claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice and the dependent claims have been amended to facilitate allowance of the pending claims.

By this Reply and Amendment, claims 3-5 and 7-9 have been amended, claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice, and new claims 26-30 have been added. Upon entry of new claims 26-30, claims 3-9 and 26-30 will be pending in the present application. Please note new claims 26-30 are dependent on allowable claim 4 and contain the subject matter of claims 5-9 which are dependent on allowable claim 3 or contain the language of allowable claim 3. (Claim 28 contains the subject matter of claim 7 prior to its placement into independent form.) Accordingly, the amendments are fully supported throughout the specification and figures of the application. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 5 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by the Poe et al. reference, US Patent No.: 6,691,037. This rejection is respectfully traversed. However, the rejection should be moot in light of the cancellation of independent claim 1 without prejudice and the amendment of claim 5 to depend from allowable claim 3.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Poe et al. reference in view of the Tubel et al. reference, US Publication No.: 2001/0023614. This rejection is again respectfully traversed; however the rejection is believed to be moot. Based on the amendments set forth above, claim 6 now ultimately depends from allowable claim 3.

Claims 7-9 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Poe et al. reference in view of the Ramakrishnan et al. reference, US Patent No.: 5,992,519. This rejection

is again respectfully traversed; however the rejection is believed to be moot. Based on the amendments set forth above, each of the claims 8-9 now directly depends from allowable claim 3. Claim 7 has been placed into independent form and includes the limitations of allowable claim 3.

In view of the foregoing remarks, all pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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